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Women and Decision-Making in Mennonite Institutions

"There is neither Jew nor
Greek, there is neither slave
nor free, there is neither male
nor female: For you are all one
in Jesus." —New Testament

(RSV)
Galatians 3:28

Given that we are all one as the body of Jesus, how do we structure the institutions needed to carry out our corporate work? Not long ago, women were excluded, for the large part, from the higher levels of decision-making in Mennonite institutions. The last 10-15 years have seen real ferment as men and women have recaptured the vision of partnership encapsulated in Galatians 3:28 and have examined the underlying thoughts and attitudes denying women access to decision-making roles.

Where has the ferment brought us in a practical sense? Are Mennonite institutions today, in 1985, any closer to gender balance at the top levels where policies are set and decisions made?

This issue of *Report* is intended as a balance sheet. On one side are the assets: what has been gained? On the other side are the liabilities: what has been lost? And at the bottom, we find the net worth: is it a deficit? a surplus? a break-even point?

But although we present numerous statistics, this balance sheet attempts to move beyond figures. This issue of *Report* contains snatches of the stories of some of those who have been key actors in the drama of men's/women's roles in Mennonite institutions, a drama involving search for truth, growth and pain. Three of the writers are men presently at the highest administrative levels of some Mennonite institutions. The women who have written for this issue also hold high-level administrative and board posts. Some of them have experienced much pain and trial in their involvement; others have not.

But whatever their particular experiences, the attitudes of humility, patience and desire to follow Christ that emerge

from all of the contributors' stories attest much to the quality of the debate. It shows that, in looking at the roles of women, many have clothed themselves in the advice of Philippians 4:2: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests but also to the interest of others."

In addition to the statistics and to the individual testimonies, this issue contains a collective effort. This past summer, Marlene Kropf and Alice Roth gathered together a group of women leaders in an Elkhart home to look backward over the path already walked and forward to ways of smoothing the journey for those yet to come. Their report on that meeting rounds out this issue of *Report*.

And now, I would like to gather up various strands of thought and suggestions presented by the contributors and integrate them into a series of questions that I hope will aid others as they think through their feelings on the subject of women's contribution to decision-making in Mennonite institutions. It goes without saying that readers' comments and thoughts are vital to an ongoing discussion: your letters are most welcome.

1. What sort of practical measures still need implementing to further facilitate women's involvement? Anna Juhnke mentions, among other things, orientation for new board members and restructuring of assignments so that women with heavy demands on their time do not have to choose between serving on many boards or none at all. Emma Richards calls upon women to continue to prepare themselves for decision-making roles by reading and studying. Marlene Kropf and Alice Roth argue that institutions must take the lead in identifying women with long-term leadership potential, helping to guide and prepare them for future service. What can be done to help institutions find concrete and specific ways in which they can continue to integrate women, and to keep the organization committed to the task?
2. How can we retain the best of feminine qualities while being integrated into a predominately male-defined system? Researchers are finding that to succeed and compete in top-level administrative positions, women must become masculine, in dress, demeanor and action. (1) This probably occurs to a lesser extent in Christian organizations than it does in secular settings. How can we as women cling to those "feminine" (and also very Christian) characteristics and values, such as service, warmth and empathy, attributes so very desperately

The 1985 edition of *Resource Listing of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Women* is now available. With the names and brief resumes of over 200 U.S. and Canadian women, the directory is designed as a bridge between those institutions and committees seeking to use more women and those women willing to offer their gifts to the service of the larger community and church.

ble without charge to institutions and for \$2 to individuals. For a copy, U.S. residents should contact Emily Will, MCC, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, Pa. 17501, phone (717) 859-1151; and Canadian residents should contact Peggy Regehr, 201-1483 Pembina Highway, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2C8; phone (204) 475-3550.

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The *Resource Listing* is available

needed in this nuclear age, while also being allowed to fully use our gifts in various church ministries?

3. On the flip side of the coin, however, some men over the past several years have attempted to grow and change and assume heretofore female roles of nurturing in home and society. In their contributions to this issue, Paula Diller Lehman and Emma Richards both speak of the changes they have witnessed in men. How can women support these individuals and encourage other men to challenge the status quo locking them into stereotyped roles and ways of relating?

4. At what point does the feminist, male or female, no longer focus on access into the system but rather on changing the system? In some cases, the very process of rapping on a closed door has led people to consider building a new house instead.

An Oct. 27 National Public Radio story, for instance, focused on Catholic women's struggle to become priests. During the struggle, some of the women have become knowledgeable enough about the functioning of the Roman Catholic hierarchy to decide they do not really want to become priests in it. They don't want to acquire positions in which they can lord it over others. Instead, they have a vision of "wagon wheel" theology in which all members of small, local house churches mutually serve one another, equidistant from the hub of their existence, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some Mennonite groups have gone a similar route. When Broad Street Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg pondered battling the Virginia Conference over their desire to ordain a woman, they decided instead to reject the entire system of ordination. Having thoroughly studied a 1981 Mennonite Church statement on "Leadership and Authority in the Life of the Church" (2), they decided that ordination, in its present fallen state at least, invested undue power in one or a few individuals. They had an alternate ideal of Christian community. Two male members of the ministerial team turned in their ordination and the church now attempts to operate on gift discernment and utilization of all its members. While they rejected ordination and the authority of the Virginia Conference to decide who is able to minister to the congregation, the Broad Street group did not sever relationships with the conference and indeed has worked at forging meaningful ties with it.

"It's very legitimate to just want access but in the long haul we're not doing anyone a favor if we don't ask

deeper questions," commented one member of the Broad Street pastoral team. To what extent should this desire to ask deeper questions be a hallmark of the Christian feminist movement?

5. Related to the above question is one that Emma Richards raises: What is the proper balance between confrontation and quiet, patient attempts to convert? Is lack of inclusiveness so far from a prophetic vision of a just order that it must be rigorously pursued and purged at the first possible opportunity? Does it hinder an institution's effort to work at other peace and justice agenda? Or should unity of the body be the overriding concern, with long, patient nurture of seeds gently sown? Are the gentler sisters now benefitting from reforms and new attitudes made possible only because of the work of the more outspoken sisters, or have the latter only served to entrench opposition and thus hinder change?

6. Contributors Florence Driedger and Daniel Zehr raise questions about an institution conventionally in the private sphere: the family. American society, with its great split between public and private domains, has relegated women and children to the home, divesting them of prestige and value and isolating them physically from the "important" arena of action. Florence notes the importance of decision-making within the family and laments how it has been undervalued. Now that women are leaving that isolated and unpaid sector, will the children be left to fend for themselves? Will men fill the void? Or will institutions be restructured so that once again, as they were for most of history, family and work roles are integrated and complementary, with no one sphere unduly elevated or lowered in society's esteem?

7. Lastly, while working for a good end, the vision embodied in Gal. 3:28, can our means be equally as worthy? What is an effective process? In his contribution, Ivan Kauffmann states, "There needs to be more conversation between those 'for' and 'against' the use of women in leadership ministries... We need to more fully understand the Anabaptist view of how a congregation is to function." A recent edition of *Conciliation Quarterly* has laid some groundwork for looking at this very issue.(3).

(1) Weistrop, Debra. An Anthropologist Looks at the New Professional Woman. *Intelligencer Journal*. October 8, 1985, p. 12-13.

Assembly, Bowling Green, Ohio, August 11-16, 1981. Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House. 1982.

(2) *Leadership and Authority in the Life of the Church*. A statement adopted by the Mennonite Church General

(3) *Conciliation Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 3, September 1985, a newsletter of Mennonite Conciliation Service.

• A Look At Some Figures

In this section, we examine some figures. Figures intended to measure women's integration into decision-making positions as MCC staffpeople and as members of MCC, General Conference and Mennonite Church boards.

Figures are hard, they are black and white. They present a graphic story, without the edges smoothed by mitigating commentary, without the grays

of interpretation. As such, figures are useful. But they certainly are not complete. Although they measure attitudes to a degree, they do so only indirectly. And the statistics contained in the following tables, especially, do not begin to measure the amount of time, energy and soul-searching that has been devoted to the subject at hand over the past 10-15 years.

Table I charts women's status, in 1975 and 1985, among the

various salary groupings available to MCC employees at headquarter settings. The salary groupings are based primarily on the amount of responsibility an individual carries, as well as on the degree of autonomy. The salary groupings range from one to eight. Job categories receiving a "1" or "2", for example, include cooks, maintenance workers, housekeepers, secretaries. At the other end, those in the executive offices are "7's" and

"8's".

Table II looks at MCC directors in field assignments: how many are women? how many are men? how many assignments are shared by husband-wife teams?

Tables III, IV and V have to do with the gender make-up of MCC, General Conference and Mennonite Church governing bodies, comparing those today with their counterparts of 5, 10 or 15 years ago. •

by Emily Will

What Do the Figures Say?

• Table I.

Types of Positions Held by Men and Women In Mennonite Central Committee Headquarters

Organization	Year	Levels of Responsibility/Salary Groupings											
		1-3				4-5				6-8			
		Men		Women		Men		Women		Men		Women	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
MCC Canada (a)	1975	1	8%	11	92%	2	67%	1	33%	6	100%	0	0%
	1985	2	8%	24	92%	17	68%	8	32%	15	94%	1	6%
MCC (b)	1975	4	13%	26	87%	4	80%	1	20%	14	93%	1	6%
	1985	4	12%	28	88%	7	50%	7	50%	12	75%	4	25%
MCC U.S. (c)	1975	1	20%	4	80%	2	100%	0	0%	3	100%	0	0%
	1985	3	17%	15	83%	11	61%	7	39%	7	78%	2	22%
Totals (MCC Canada, MCC, and MCC U.S.)	1975	6	13%	41	87%	8	80%	2	20%	23	96%	1	4%
	1985	9	12%	67	88%	35	61%	22	39%	34	83%	7	17%

1-3:

Secretaries, bookkeepers, administrative assistants, production room employees.

4-5:

Program coordinators, assistant administrators, personnel secretaries, editorial assistants, accountants.

6-8:

Executive offices, provincial and regional directors, department heads.

(a)

Statistics include Winnipeg and provincial offices; do not include SELFHELP, Material Aid or maintenance staff.

(b)

Statistics include these departments: Executive, Overseas, Administration and Resources, Data Processing, Financial Services, Information Services, Peace Section, Personnel Services. They do not include custodians, housekeepers, maintenance personnel, hostesses or cooks.

(c)

Statistics include Executive Office, U.S. Program, Washington office, Elkhart office, U.S. Peace Section, Development Education, Mennonite Disaster Service, regional offices, do not include SELFHELP, Material Aid or Mennonite Mental Health Services.

• Table II.

Men, Women and Couples Serving as MCC Country Representatives and as VS Unit Directors

Position	Year	Men		Women		Couples	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Overseas Country Reps	1975	22	100%	0	0%	0	0%
	1985	6	20%	3	10%	21	70%
U.S. Voluntary Service Unit Directors	1975	7	100%	0	0%	0	0%
	1985	2	33%	2	33%	2	33%

• Notes/Observations on Tables I and II

1. Women still constitute the bulwark of the office support staff in the 1-3 salary grouping, and the numbers of men serving in these positions has not grown since 1975.
2. Today, men and women are approaching equal representation in the 4-5 salary grouping. These mid-level positions, very few of which were in existence in 1975, comprise an area where women have clearly gained opportunities.
3. Although no women have yet achieved the 7 or 8 responsibility level, significant numbers are now in the 6 category. As a whole, progress has not been negligible in this upper 6-8 grouping. It can also be expected that women will continue to move into the higher grouping as they gain the necessary experience and exposure in mid-level positions.
4. MCC Canada lags a bit behind MCC and MCC U.S. in including women in mid- and upper-level positions of responsibility.
5. Perhaps the most dramatic shift in women's involvement has occurred away from headquarters. Ten years ago, all country representatives and VS unit directors were men. Today, the great majority of the overseas positions are shared by couples. In the United States, VS unit directors are equally likely to be men, women or couples. Conversations I have had with some of the country reps have convinced me that the jobs are indeed shared; the women have not assumed the title of co-country rep without picking up the accompanying responsibilities. Couples who come to headquarters assignments after having worked side-by-side in overseas or VS settings, sharing the burdens and joys of responsibility, have sometimes been disappointed when such flexibility is not allowed at headquarters.
6. Methodology: The May 31, 1985 MCC Personnel Listing, as well as actual salary designations, were used for the 1985 figures. VS employees were assigned a rating equivalent to what the position would receive if salaried. 1975 salary groupings were determined on the basis of comparable 1985 ratings, i.e. if an administrative assistant position received a "3" rating in 1985, it was assigned a "3" for 1975 as well.

• Table III.

Composition, by Gender, of
MCC and Related Boards

Name of Board	Year	Composition			
		Men		Women	
		#	%	#	%
MCC Executive Committee	1975	7	88%	1	12%
	1980	10	91%	1	9%
	1985	10	83%	2	17%
MCC Members	1975	32	94%	2	6%
	1980	34	89%	4	11%
	1985	31	84%	6	16%
MCC Canada Executive Committee	1975	5	83%	1	17%
	1980	7	100%	0	0%
	1985	7	88%	1	12%
MCC Canada Members	1975	26	93%	2	7%
	1980	27	96%	1	4%
	1985	28	90%	3	10%
MCC U.S. Executive Committee (a)	1975	8	89%	1	11%
	1980	6	86%	1	14%
	1985	5	71%	2	29%
MCC U.S. Members	1975	—	—	—	—
	1980	27	87%	4	13%
	1985	20	77%	6	23%
MCC Canada Peace and Social Concerns	1975	—	—	—	—
	1980	14	78%	4	22%
	1985	7	78%	2	22%
U.S. Peace Section (b)	1975	19	83%	4	17%
	1980	14	70%	6	30%
	1985	12	63%	7	37%
West Coast MCC	1980	14	88%	2	12%
	1985	14	88%	2	12%

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(a)

1975 figures refer to Department of U.S. Ministries Board.

(b)

1975 figures refer to U.S. appointees to Peace Section Board.

Name of Board	Year	Composition			
		Men		Women	
		#	%	#	%
MCC Central States	1980	17	81%	4	19%
	1985	17	68%	8	32%
MCC Great Lakes	1980	12	86%	2	14%
	1985	16	70%	7	30%
MCC East Coast	1981	17	85%	3	15%
	1985	20	87%	3	13%
Mennonite Disaster Service (c)	1975	6	100%	0	0%
	1980	6	100%	0	0%
	1985	18	95%	1	5%
Mennonite Mental Health Services	1975	16	100%	0	0%
	1980	15	88%	2	12%
	1985	15	88%	2	12%
Mennonite Economic Development Associates	1980	20	100%	0	0%
	1985	19	86%	3	14%
Mennonite Indemnity, Inc.	1975	14	100%	0	0%
	1980	13	100%	0	0%
	1985	14	100%	0	0%

(c)

1975 and 1980 figures refer to officers only; 1985 figures include all MDS Section members.

• Notes/Observations on Table III.

1. Today, only three of the 16 boards listed in Table III have 30 percent women or more. These are U.S. Peace Section, MCC Central States and MCC Great Lakes. No board reaches numerical equality of representation by gender, or even 40 percent.
2. In 1985, eight of the 16 MCC boards—or exactly half of them—have less than 15 percent representation by women. Three of these, including MCC Canada, Mennonite Disaster Service and Mennonite Indemnity, Inc., have 10 percent or less. Mennonite Indemnity, Inc. has no female representation on its 14-member board.
3. No clear trend toward greater inclusion of women is evident over the last 5-10 years on several boards, including MCC Executive Committee, MCC Canada Executive Committee, MCC Canada Peace and Social Concerns, West Coast MCC, MCC East Coast and Mennonite Mental Health Services.
4. A clearer trend to greater inclusion of women over the past 5-10 years is evident on these boards: MCC, MCC Canada, MCC U.S. Executive Committee, MCC U.S., U.S. Peace Section, MCC Central States, MCC Great Lakes and Mennonite Economic Development Associates.
5. MCC U.S. is ahead of MCC and MCC Canada in women's board participation.
6. The figures in Table III allow plenty of room for individual interpretation. Some will see great progress; others will see little. Some will see much hope for continued forward momentum; others will say women's increased participation has levelled out.
7. Information in Table III was taken from the MCC Personnel Listings of June 15, 1975, June 15, 1980 and May 31, 1985.

• Table IV.

Composition, by Gender, of
Mennonite Church Boards

Name of Board	Year	Composition			
		Men		Women	
		#	%	#	%
General Assembly—Officers	1973	3	100%	0	0%
	1985	2	100%	0	0%
General Assembly—Committees	1973	19	83%	4	17%
	1985	23	62%	14	38%

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Name of Board	Year	Composition			
		Men		Women	
		#	%	#	%
General Board	1973	15	94%	1	6%
	1985	27	82%	6	18%
Board of Congregational Ministries	1973	8	89%	1	11%
	1985	8	67%	4	33%
Mennonite Board of Education	1973	9	90%	1	10%
	1985	8	62%	5	38%
Mennonite Board of Missions	1973	9	90%	1	10%
	1985	9	75%	3	25%
Mennonite Mutual Aid	1973	13	100%	0	0%
	1985	14	82%	3	18%
Mennonite Publication Board	1973	9	100%	1	10%
	1985	7	58%	5	42%

1973 statistics taken from Mennonite Yearbook 1973, as quoted in *Report*, No. 5, April 1974.

1985 statistics taken from Mennonite Yearbook 1985.

• Table V.

Composition, by Gender, of
General Conference Boards

Name of Board	Year	Composition			
		Men		Women	
		#	%	#	%
General Board—Executive Committee	1978	5	83%	1	17%
	1985	3	50%	3	50%
General Board	1978	12	75%	4	25%
	1985	11	61%	7	39%
Division of Administration	1978	8	89%	1	11%
	1985	6	75%	2	25%
Commission on Education	1978	7	50%	7	50%
	1985	7	54%	6	46%
Commission on Home Ministries	1978	11	69%	5	31%
	1985	11	65%	6	35%
Commission on Overseas Ministries	1978	11	73%	4	27%
	1985	8	57%	6	43%
Conference of Mennonites in Canada— General Board	1978	7	88%	1	12%
	1985	7	88%	1	12%

Figures taken from the 1978/1979 and 1985 editions of *Handbook of Information*, Faith and Life Press, 722 Main St., Newton, KS 67114.

• Notes/Observations on Tables
IV and V.

1. The Executive Committee of the General Board of the General Conference has achieved, in 1985, parity of male/female representation. This is the only one of the 30 boards surveyed for this issue of *Report* to carry that distinction. Several others, however, approach parity: GC Commission on Education, GC Commission on Overseas Ministries and MC Mennonite Publication Board.
2. In 1985, General Conference boards are the most evenly balanced, genderwise, of the three organizations presented in this *Report*: General Conference, Mennonite Church and MCC. The Conference of Mennonites in Canada, however, lags behind other GC bodies in including women.
3. Within the Mennonite Church, women have gained most seats—and near equity—on the Mennnite Board of Education and the Mennonite Publication Board. They fall behind on the Mennonite Mutual Aid Board and on the General Board.
4. There is a very clear trend toward greater involvement of women in the Mennonite church over the 12-year period from 1973- to 1985.
5. The overall rate of women's participation on General Conference boards, excluding the Conference of Mennonites of Canada, is 40 percent; for Mennonite Church boards, the comparable figure is 30 percent; and for MCC boards, 18 percent.



What Do Participants Say?

- **Florence Drieger, Member, MCC, MCC Executive Committee and officer, MCC Peace Section.**

Probably one of the most succinct and lasting statements that has impacted my experiences in Mennonite and non-Mennonite decision-making roles was made by a woman in union leadership who spoke to a group of university women some 25 years ago. She said there were so many very important issues and problems of such magnitude in the world that needed both women and men to work on that she had no time to worry about whether she was discriminated against or not. She felt her focus had to be on service to others. She could not be accountable if she constantly considered others' attitudes and actions in relation to her as the criteria of whether or not she should act. In her action she gained credibility and entry into decision-making activity.

As Mennonites, many years ago we acclaimed the "priesthood of all believers." Each of us is accountable to God for our decision about him. While others can help or hinder the process of accepting Christ and serving him, Jesus made it eminently clear that when we meet him each of us is accountable for our own actions and cannot blame someone else for faith or lack of it.

I have had the opportunity to participate in boards and committees at local, provincial, national and international levels. Often they have had a preponderance of men. I have experienced acceptance and have been given every opportunity to serve to the capacity of my time, energy and ability. These opportunities have spanned over 30 years of my life. I may have been fortunate that I became involved before the days of the feminist movement. Sometimes I feel this movement has been perceived to be self-interest oriented, thereby demanding a great amount of energy for sorting out motivation that might have been more effectively used in service.

Personally I have had to establish credibility as I became involved, but so did the men I worked with. When the issue of intimidation as a result of being in the minority

came up I have found it frequently stemmed from self-centeredness and lack of trust in God: self-centeredness and self-interest in that I was worried about whether I would fail and what others would think of me; and lack of trust in that I did not truly believe God had led me into the situation and would continue to undergird and give me strength to do what he asked me to do.

Being responsible and accountable also has been motivated by a sense of tremendous opportunity that I have had over the years. This sense has been reinforced over and over and over again in my daily life. I've never been hungry. I've experienced the love of family and many, many friends. God has been so very generous to me. Why should I have been so fortunate and so many others not? How can I help but do whatever I can to make it possible for others to experience the same?

Lest it appear participation is out of obligation alone, let me quickly say that it also comes from the joy, challenge and excitement of serving, learning and growing in participation.

How did I become involved? It was not my seeking. God chose me in mysterious and nonconventional ways. A month after an MCC annual meeting in Edmonton, I received a letter welcoming me to the board and executive. A complete surprise. I was nominated and voted in before I was aware of the nomination. The nominating committee could not contact me in order to follow its usual procedure.

God will call us to service and this includes into places of decision-making, but not necessarily on our terms or in our ways. A caution I think is in order. As women let us not push to participate in ways and places that, from experience, men are trying to disengage from because they do not promote a wholesome life of service.

And what does it feel like to be in a predominantly male environment? Where there has been love, caring and focus on the task, there has been a sense of team work and accomplishment. When persons have felt threatened there has been need to respond as one does to anyone who is threatened. I have worked in all-male, all-female and mixed groups. Ease of participation has not had anything to do with these factors but rather with the motivation and personalities of individual members. Some of the most difficult experiences I've had were in groups of troubled women.

Lois Edmund has been appointed assistant professor of practical theology at Canadian Mennonite Bible College. A member of the Home Street Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, she has a doctorate in psychology.

Irma Fast Dueck is serving as youth pastor of Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

Carol Weaver has been appointed assistant professor of music at Conrad Grebel College.

Donna Briedger of Osler, Sask. is serving on the Native Ministries Board for the Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan.

Karen James-Abra, who holds a Master of Divinity degree from McMaster University of Ontario, was recently installed and licensed for the pastorate of Nairn Mennonite Church in Nairn, Ont.

Do women have a unique contribution to make? Each woman and each man is unique. Each has insights to bring if they take the time to reflect, learn and in love share their insights, whether they are in positions of leadership or not. It is not the position that is important. It is the insight and the willingness to be involved that is important. In my experience, agendas are changed when insights are shared by women or men. Without sharing, agendas cannot be changed.

While I place the responsibility of being accountable to God for our gifts on each of us as women, I am equally as concerned that men take the same responsibility for what they do, but that is for another essay.

As women many of us have had the unique privilege of nurturing our children as they learn to live a life of faith, love and acceptance of all persons as created in God's image and worthy in his sight. Many men and women do not have this opportunity. This opportunity is a decision-making role in one of the basic institutions of the Mennonite community and society. Unfortunately, it is often not viewed in this light and women feel left out of the mainstream of church and community. I believe it is critical this decision-making role be linked to the community and church, and women see how their influence impacts all the issues of church and society.

We cannot take time to worry about ourselves. We must understand the issues of church and community such as violence, poverty, discrimination and what we do day to day in our homes that prepares or fails to prepare people to deal with the issues. We must not take time to worry about the latest fashion, cake recipe or whether Johnny and Sarah are perfect. They need time to grow, explore and learn and we must move beyond our little worlds of safety and be ready to risk, be vulnerable and lose our lives for Christ's sake.

If God leads us to the sole task of child rearing for a time, let us be wise and see how we too are in decision-making service. We cannot sit idly by feeling sorry for ourselves or think less of ourselves in this calling. A sense of confidence, thoughtfulness and purpose prepares one for whatever task God gives.

Until and unless we can and will risk, as difficult as that might be, women will not be part of the leadership in our homes, churches and communities. Our talents will be taken from us and given to the person with 10 who used hers/his wisely. •

• **Marie Wiens, Member, MCC, MCC Executive Committee, and Board of Directors of Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary.**

The evolvement of leadership among women has touched us in almost all areas of our lives. While it was a long time coming I feel many significant steps have been taken. I found the process itself has been most fascinating. Much of the ferment is gone now, and it is good to look back a bit and view the present situation.

Women are not just tokens anymore, but are now more frequently accepted as part of the decision-making in church and conference boards. At first it was awkward being the only women on a board or administrative staff that had been all male until then. That is more or less behind us now. I find that men are still more conscious of this than women. I confess I don't think of myself as being the only female on a board—*until* a man makes some remark calling attention to it, not out of malice, but because it is still a bit novel. I must say that I have been accorded respect and dignity on all the organizations in which I have served.

There have, of course, been some humorous incidents, like the registration card which asked, "Will your wife attend the Friday banquet with you?" to which I replied, "No, and neither will my husband." Or the management seminar I attended once where name tags were made to anchor in a shirt pocket. I was the only person there without a shirt pocket!

When I took a study leave some years ago I requested that when I returned I would like one full-time secretary, instead of two half-time. "And while you're at it," I said, "make it a male." And thus it happened. He was one of the best. But when people telephoned and he answered, "This is Marie Wiens's secretary," a few almost hung up, they were so unprepared for this.

I'm pleased for the much fuller participation of women in our church work (it was a bit unreal to have men make all decisions, see to the spiritual needs of all its members when over half are inevitably female). The church and the related organizations are greatly enriched and enhanced by having women actively and creatively participate.

I'm just as pleased that it is happening in a mutual acceptance between men and women. The sharp rhetoric of recent years has given way to a mutual respect in a spirit of interdependence. Churches, conference boards, the world in general, are all benefitting from this.

I believe the time is past for dwelling on the hurts and

Report readers are invited to attend an upcoming conference of the *Evangelical Womens Caucus, International*, an organization that was formed 10 years ago to promote the rights and equality of women in evangelical churches. The conference will be held July 6-10, 1986 in Fresno, Calif. and will have a roster of five nationally known plenary speakers, as well as over 70 workshops of interest to women. For details, contact Kathryn Neufeld, Coordinator,

407 S. Clovis Ave., No. 112, Fresno, Calif. 93727; (209) 266-5880.

Marian Sauder, a recent graduate of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries is working at Heartsease Home in New York City, a residential home for young women ages 16-20. The home was begun in 1899 by two women who wanted to provide care for destitute young women.

slights of the past. We need to get on with the work at hand, making allowance for occasional lapses, often not intentional (insensitive, maybe).

I look at this whole process in my own family. My husband and I modeled very traditional roles in marriage for years. They were good years. But when other times came, we were, fortunately, both able to change, adjust, and accept a rather marked departure from this traditional lifestyle, and ease into one which called for each of us to use our gifts in responsibilities to which each one of us had been called. •

• **Daniel Zehr, Executive Director, MCC Canada**

During my growing-up years and early in my own involvement in church leadership, the role of women in the church never came to my attention as an issue. Mother's role in the church was never public except in teaching children or women's Sunday School class. Her many good ideas, questions and concerns on church matters were fed to my father who in turn shared them in church meetings, probably as though they were his own.

Both women and men assumed, more than they emphasized, an interpretation of Scripture that made men eligible for designated leadership roles for which women would never have been considered. If women questioned or resented this, it would never have been brought to public attention. I'm not saying that those were the good old days or that we should return to them, though I must admit that there was at times an apparent social/familial contentment that sometimes invokes nostalgia in me. The occupational context in which I grew up was farming, in which respective roles for father, mother and siblings were clearly defined. Though not free of tension and conflict, there was a cohesiveness and interdependency that was perpetuated without basic questioning.

I share a great deal of empathy with those women and men who feel that women and the church have been shortchanged by ignoring women's leadership gifts. I am of the opinion when considering the whole of Scripture that we have practiced too much the denial of women's leadership gifts in the church. I believe that far more attention in the church needs to be given to individual and corporate gift discernment, and less to gender dictating who should be in or out of a particular role or ministry. A review of the various gifts and members of the body which Paul lists in I Corinthians 12 leads one to the obvious conclusion that these are to be found in both male and female. If a fellowship of believers endeavors to

prayerfully discern members' gifts and the Holy Spirit leads it to select a female or a male (who also discerns that calling) to minister to that fellowship or congregation, then I believe her/his ministry has God's approval and blessing.

The scope of this article does not permit full treatment of the topic. I have already identified my emphasis on gift discernment rather than on gender differentiation in the church. I believe such an emphasis will minimize unwise decisions in the selection of leadership, whether male or female. A fallacious tendency, however, in the transition to involve women more, is to appoint a woman because she is a woman, or a man because he is a man.

Another important forum is the Christian family whose cohesive integrity is violated when the woman's traditional role of homemaker is neglected *without* corresponding adjustments to the traditional role of the man. Role-modelling is extremely important for children and unless traditional mother and father roles shift correspondingly, a child's future chances for successful marriage seem substantially reduced.

Finally, I believe one of the greatest pitfalls in the secular feminist movement is its heavy emphasis on individualism. For the Christian family and church to function faithfully under Christ's Lordship, it must maintain the practice inscribed in I Corinthians 12:26: "If one member suffers, all suffer together: if one member is honored, all rejoice together." That principle is usually not present in such expressions as, "It's my body, I can do with it what I like", or, "Change your role if that's what you want, I'll continue doing what I always did."

The abiding principle in all relationships and roles must be the agape love described in I Corinthians 13. This love is not mustered up by human effort but comes from the divine when we recognize our need for it and receive it.

As I'm approaching the half-century mark of my life, I have witnessed and been involved in the transition, still taking place, from when there were almost no women in church leadership roles to increasing numbers of them. My own shift to openness toward placing women into leadership roles has come about through studying numerous Biblical texts, in the Old Testament and the New, and through discussions with Christian women and men for whom this is a serious concern. I have witnessed with appreciation numerous contributions to leadership and decision-making by women in the church. This has been increasingly so over the more than 20 years of my own involvement in church activities. •



- **Anna Juhnke, chair, MCC U.S.; member, MCC and General Board of the General Conference Mennonite Church.**

The following comments arise from my experiences as a board member:

1. Nominating committees are crucial at all levels of church leadership. They must be truly dedicated to identifying new people with gifts, energy and vision. Otherwise they will find it easier simply to move around the veteran male leaders who already perform at their peak and know everybody in the system.

Two kinds of help should back up a nominating committee. First, each member needs a different network of informants to consult with; obviously some of these should be women informants, older and younger. Second, the committee should be able to promise genuine mentoring and orientation for new nominees or be willing to give that orientation themselves. No newcomer wants to accept a job where she will look stupid, especially if she is to represent a minority that is already suspected of being less competent.

Concerned women should volunteer to serve on nominating committees, and also work for bylaws that require equal representation of men and women on such committees as well as on other appropriate groups. My congregation requires equal representation on the deacon board and aims for equal representation on the church council.) At the 1980 Estes Park conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church, a nominating committee with only one female member presented a ballot with few women. At the conference, young feminists recruited more female candidates and had them nominated from the floor by prominent people. Several were elected. By the next conference, the General Board had closed the loophole of nominations from the floor! But it also changed the way districts send their representatives to the nominating committee, so that a balanced committee of men and women could be formed.

It is also important for established women's groups to name representatives to church boards at all levels. Since 1974, Women in Mission has named a representative to each Commission of the General Conference which it supports financially, although not to the General Board.

2. Although I have just praised an interlocking representation, interlocking directorates may also prevent broad participation of women. The inner circle remains small when boards (for example, MCC Peace Section) are

made up entirely of representatives of other boards. Furthermore, most women (and men) carry multiple responsibilities at home and in their professions which limit the number of interlocking committees and boards they can perform well on.

For example, as a member of the General Conference Board, I am its representative to (and chair of) the Communications Committee and its representative to MCC and MCC U.S. I agreed to be chair of MCC U.S. if I did not also have to be its liaison to four MCC Executive Committee meetings as well as attending the four MCC U.S. Executive Committee meetings.

Another example of this interlocking: if a woman were to become chair of a provincial MCC, she would become a member of MCC Canada (and possibly its executive committee). The total number of meetings in a tight system like this can be overwhelming, but I don't know if this is the reason there are no female provincial chairpersons.

3. After observing the gracious leadership of men in MCC U.S. and General Conference I cannot claim that women bring superior gifts of nurturance and group process. However it seems to me that the committees I know with more equal male-female representation are more informally democratic and less solemn about themselves than those that are mostly male. This might not be true in secular settings where women have had to fight hard to share the power held by men, and must always be on their guard. I believe the "servant theology" of Mennonites is enabling us to evolve more gracefully toward leadership shared by women and men. I'm thankful for the freedom, trust and support I have experienced from men and women on Mennonite boards. •

- **John A. Lapp, Executive Secretary of Mennonite Central Committee**

What yet is there to say on this topic? Are there any new angles to pursue?

The move from Goshen College to Mennonite Central Committee has sharpened one dimension for me, namely, the cross-cultural issue. At a recent orientation for new people heading overseas, one concern was how to be a feminist—North American style—in African or Asian society. I was pleased with the sensitivity but I am not sure the answer was satisfactory. Shortly thereafter at an ecumenical conversation on Christian-Muslim relationships the issue became conspicuous. Now we were

Carolyn Horst Brubaker has completed a book about her Lancaster County ancestors entitled *History and Genealogy of Jacob M. Horst and Magdalena Weaver*. Carolyn is a surgical technologist employed by Wilkes-Barre General Hospital and Luzerne County Community College. Anyone interested in her work may write her at 52 Grandview Ave., Dallas, Pa. 18612.

Ingrid Loepp has been elected to serve on the board of MCC Canada as one of six representatives of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

Seventy-two-year-old Helen McMullen, a retired teacher and recent graduate of Conrad Grebel College, is a full-time volunteer worker at Downtown Eastside Women's Centre in Vancouver. There she meets women who have been battered, raped and victimized by incest. Writing in the Oct. 14 issue of *Mennonite Reporter*, Helen says, "When I am confronted with bruised and battered women—sometimes with black eyes or broken noses or jaws—I

cannot help but realize how helpless, frustrated and dehumanized they must feel."

dealing not only with cultural variation but dogma itself. Having only males on the program suggested North American Christians still have room to grow.

I am impressed on the one hand with the progress Mennonites in general have made on this issue. One reason for this is the substantial number of well trained, experienced and articulate women who are able to assume full leadership roles without a long period of transition. On the other hand, I am also impressed by how superficial much of this change has been. It is very easy to revert to earlier habits of organization almost totally male. While I wish quotas or specifically designated places on the ballot would not be required, I am sure they are necessary until we are permeated by a vision that is beyond gender.

Nearly all the boards, committees and activities I participate in have women members. They are not yet equal in terms of representation but they are more equitable there than in the administrative positions of church agencies. This, it seems to me, is where we need to put more emphasis although I am acutely aware that I have not been very successful in placing women in administrative positions where I have responsibilities for such. One of the issues here is how administrative assignments are defined. Women in such positions will have to help shape some new styles and approaches.

One of the desperate needs of our time in North America is to recover a greater sense of public responsibility. This I believe will only happen when individuals find their identity in belonging to some sort of group. For us as followers of Christ this primary community is called the church. I hope the Committee on Women's Concerns can help chart this path. •

• **Paula Diller Lehman, Secretary for Youth Education for the Commission on Education of the General Conference Mennonite Church**

As a teenager, I was very involved in the activities and programs of a General Conference Mennonite congregation. After one church program, I remember being approached by an older man who said to me, "You should be a minister when you grow up." Maybe he was

only joking but judging by his tone of voice, I think not. I walked away from the statement amused. I did not think it was possible for a woman to be a minister in the Mennonite church. I had never heard of one and there seemed to be obvious Biblical mandates to the contrary.

Now, 15 years later, I find myself as an administrator of youth education for the General Conference Mennonite Church. Two things happened in my life to allow for that transition; one, I studied the Greek language and realized the complexity of translation and interpretation, and two, I felt the affirmation and support of people within the church for my gifts in ministry.

Recent feminist exegesis continues to raise important questions of interpretation far beyond my initial questioning. Feminist theology continues to be a source of enlightenment and empowerment for me.

What is it like to be a woman in a leadership position? Exasperating and exciting. There are times when I feel excluded because the language of the business meeting is often masculine. Or when a male colleague reiterates something I said in the meeting and then it seems to carry more weight. When how I look or dress seems more important than what I think or do. Knowing that the ultimate decision-making power still rests in the hands of a few men concerns me.

However, I have experienced times when men have broken the typical male stereotypes. I work with male colleagues who are emotional, sensitive and, at times, intuitive. It is exciting to be a part of growth and change.

I believe the inclusion of women in decision-making or leadership positions has affected the "agenda" only to the point of making the agenda more wholistic. The more voices heard, the more experiences shared, the more lives changed.

Fear of change, growth and loss of control seem to be some of the factors which keep women from participating fully in the life of the church. Involvement of women or any minority in decision-making does not need to threaten the authority or credibility of our decisions as a church. What is at stake is our ability and commitment to live as responsible, creative people of God on earth. It seems to me that we are to share and celebrate the power of God among us. The power of God, not ours. •

Pam Brubaker is Lancaster Conference's new staffperson for the Commission on Aging, a part-time position. She is a nurse by profession.

Women in Development: A Resource Guide for Organization and Action is both a reference book (containing exhaustive bibliographies and resource lists) and a general reader for individuals interested in the problems faced by women worldwide. The book contains sections on women and multi-nationals, land, food, appropriate technology, health, educa-

tion, communication, migration and tourism. A soft-bound edition is available for \$14.95 from New Society Publishers, 4722 Baltimore Ave., Philadelphia, Pa. 19143. Phone (215)726-6543.

• **Ivan Kauffman, Executive Secretary, Mennonite Church General Board**

I have served in a churchwide office since 1972. During that time there has been a significant increase in the number of women who are serving in administrative and board positions in churchwide agencies. I predict that the trend will continue.

I believe that it is in line with New Testament teaching for both women and men to use the gifts which God has given them to serve the church in whatever way the church requests. Those who use their leadership gifts are to use them in a servanthood style rather than in an authoritative, ruling style. Christ is the head of the church, and all authority has been given to him. Christ in turn has given the responsibility for binding and loosing, proclaiming the good news, nurturing, etc. to the church, his body. This responsibility and the decision-making that accompanies it belongs to the body, not an individual, neither man nor woman. To me the question is not—should a woman be on a churchwide board, or serve in a top level staff position, or be a pastor or preach on Sunday morning? The question is—has God given those kinds of gifts to women, and are they using those gifts as servants of the church at the request of the church? The same question should be asked of any man.

I believe that much has been gained and very little lost since women have been included in greater numbers on churchwide boards and as senior administrators. Because of the newness of this practice of having women serve in this way, the women have probably needed to have higher than average ability and a double portion of courage and humility. Consequently the results have been extraordinary with very few problems arising. In practice the idea of women serving has worked out well. When it is discussed from a theoretical point of view there continues to be much disagreement. This year the Nominating Committee of the Mennonite Church General Assembly made a deliberate decision to place more women on the ballot than men in order to even out the men/women ratio on our churchwide boards and committees.

I have had the advantage of having a woman associate secretary serving in the General Board office. She has been well qualified and has served in a capable way. I have observed that in some ways her work is more difficult than it would be for a man because of her gender (and also her race). I have felt good about sharing decision-making power with her. I have no question but that God has given these kinds of administrative gifts to women as well as to men, and I am convinced that God wants women to have these gifts used in these capacities. I believe that it is time to more fully use the vast resource of gifts which God has given women for service in the church.

Whether we like it or not the women's lib movement has forced the church to rethink its traditional stance on the role of women in the life of the church. Unfortunately some in the church want to label as "all bad" anything that has resulted from the women's lib movement. Obviously this reaction to women's lib by some persons has been a hindrance in bringing the changes which are needed in our church life and practices.

In the past 50 years or more there has been strong teaching on the submissive role of women (Eph. 5:22). Along with that were specific applications made which were reinforced at every wedding, Mother's Day and family emphasis day. Unfortunately, the teaching was not as strong on mutual submission (Eph. 5:21) or on the man loving as Christ loved (Eph. 5:25). The result of this has been the development of a tradition with a strong supporting conscience that is built into the life and spirit of many in the church. This is not easily or quickly changed.

Some who have changed their minds and practices with regard to the role of women are actively working to change the practice of the church on this matter. I have felt that on some occasions their pressure methods have hindered the cause rather than helped it.

There needs to be more conversation between those "for" and "against" the use of women in leadership ministries. The two groups are often talking past each other rather than to each other. There are perplexing questions about what the Bible says and about our traditional practices. We need to more fully understand the Anabaptist view of how a congregation is to function.



The final report of *Inside/Out*, an advocacy project for women in the criminal justice system is now available for \$7. The report describes an innovative model program for female offenders administered by the Smith College School of Social Work. For a copy contact the school at Lilly Hall, Northampton, Mass. 01063. Phone (413) 584-2700.

- **Emma Richards, pastor, Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Church and chair, Committee on Women in Leadership Ministries of the Mennonite Church.**

About 15 years ago I was on a churchwide administrative committee as the only female. The male chair recognized me kindly during the breaks, held the door for me and asked about my husband and children. But, as he led the meeting, he ignored my presence in the discussions and committee decisions. One occasion stands out vividly in my memory. During a meeting I expressed my opinion on the issue at hand. Then the chair turned to a male member of the committee and asked for his opinion. He responded by saying, "I like Emma's idea and would support it." The chair asked him, "Would you please state what you would support?" And the committee member simply turned to me and said, "Emma, would you please restate it since you can do so much better than I." So it was, after two years the chair was challenged to listen to the female member of the committee.

Things have changed over these past 15 years. Such behavior may still take place on the local level where some strong-willed men are still in control, but it seldom happens on the churchwide level. What has signaled the change? There are many things, but four stand out in my mind.

First, I as a female would no longer perpetuate such discrimination against me or my sisters. I tolerated it then in a spirit of humility and love. Now I would no longer tolerate it, but I would confront in the same spirit of humility, love and a call to faithfulness. More and more church women are experiencing this call of God to faithfulness knowing there are times to be meek and gentle, but there are also times to be bold and prophetic. In quietness I recently sat at my sewing table making a peace banner. But how boldly invigorating it was to know that that same banner stating "Mennonite Women Pastors for Peace" was part of over 24,000 banners crying for peace in Washington August 4.

Second, many of my Christian brothers have become sensitized to the kind of unchristian discrimination expressed by that committee chair. In a straightforward manner they have learned to address the issue. I recently attended a large Christian gathering where most of the major addresses were quite discriminatory. One brother boldly confronted a speaker with, "I found your sermon to be very sexist." Our church journalists are using their pens to be more confrontive. They give women names! Since language plays a central role in socialization, change is coming through our language.

Third, through more female models from whom women can learn, and through more experience with women from whom men can learn, we in the church are experiencing a growing block of authentic female leaders. There have always been gifted female leaders in the church. But scattered from one another, recognized in a few very defined areas, and looked upon with suspicion that even questioned their Biblical faith or loyalty to the church, many women buried their talents. Now that is harder to do.

Fourth, there is a growing awareness in the church of the fact that our understanding of Scripture is greatly influenced by our cultural setting and our recent past. By "recent past" I mean the last 50-100 years. As we learn from other cultures and become more aware of the long stream of Christian history, the place of women in the church becomes more inclusive rather than exclusive. In our understanding of the Bible we are also much more aware of the basic principles: (a) clear Biblical passages should determine our understanding of the difficult and obscure ones, (b) any Biblical teaching must be based on cross references, not on a few isolated passages and (c) understanding any one passage must be aligned with the great teaching of the Bible.

So change has come. On the other hand there is still need for much more. I have been in places where the woman/women have brought real accountability, enlightenment and creativity to a board. I have also been with women who were ill prepared for their assignment. Some have not learned to say "no" when asked. So they are working in areas in which they have little interest or aptitude. Just as men have found self-esteem in jobs of high visibility so have women. Responsible jobs call for responsibility, ability, dedication and Christian commitment—not possessiveness. Women can read good books, attend seminars and observe good administration from a female perspective.

In conclusion, as I assess my 30 plus years of working in the Mennonite Church, they have been good. However, in the midst of some situations I wondered how God could call us Mennonites a faithful people! The sins of one generation do impede faithfulness and understanding in the next generation. That is a fact of church life that we are now experiencing. I desire to be loving and patient, but God also calls some to be prophets. I long with Moses (Numbers 11:29) "would that all God's people were prophets and that God's spirit would be upon all of them". When that day comes then men and women will serve Christ and the church not according to their sex but according to their gifts! "Thy kingdom come!" •

"Naming the Unnameable" is a pamphlet discussing the problem of *sexual harassment in the church*. It recounts the experiences of women church workers and offers guidelines for mediating complaints and organizing educational workshops. Single copies cost \$2.50 and are available from the Council on Women and The Church, United Presbyterian Church, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 1151, New York, N.Y. 10115.

Anna Garber, missionary linguist in Burkina Faso with the General Conference Mennonite Church since 1982, has taken a year's sabbatical to study towards a doctorate in linguistics at the University of Illinois. She will return to Africa next summer.

by Marlene Kropf and Alice Roth

Experiences Shared

In early summer a group of women from the Goshen-Elkhart area met to discuss their observations of women's roles and participation on Mennonite boards and in Mennonite institutions over the past 10 to 15 years. Representing a cross section of Mennonite women, members of the group ranged in age from the mid-20s to mid-50s. Their collective experience included serving as board members of church colleges, Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Church General Board, Mennonite Mutual Aid, Mennonite Board of Missions, Afro-American Mennonite Association, Women's Missionary and Service Commission, and employment in a variety of teaching and administrative roles in church agencies.

The group was quick to note several positive changes that have occurred in recent years. In contrast to the past when women were often co-opted from women's organizations to serve on churchwide boards, women are now elected or selected in their own right. Women participate more fully in churchwide decision-making. For example, only one woman delegate participated in the newly reorganized Mennonite Church General Assembly at Turner, Oregon in 1969. At Ames, Iowa—just 16 years later—30 percent of the delegates were women.

More women are being hired for leadership roles by church agencies, thanks in part to encouragement by women board members. Women now receive equal pay and benefits for their work.

Although the number of women involved in decision-making has increased, most of the women present could vividly remember being the only woman present on a board or being one of two or three women in a room full of male executives. They recalled feelings of uncertainty, discomfort and exclusion. One woman was totally intimidated by her experience on a churchwide board. Another told of listening with incredible concentration to everything that was said in order to find out what was really going on. One woman described being frustrated by men who made decisions in the restrooms during breaks and failed to inform her of their conclusions.

In their minority position, some of these women felt a need to justify themselves with male credentials in the male world. Their skills and experience outside the corridors of power seemed to count for little. They especially remembered hesitating to voice contrary views or support unpopular positions. They believed they would not be forgiven for mistakes. They sensed great pressure to be productive and successful. One woman said that her credibility with men on church boards increased dramatically when she married.

All of the women reported that they had received no orientation whatsoever for their role as minority persons. They simply had to find their own way through difficult, uncharted territory.

These women perceive Mennonite men to be ambivalent about women's roles in places of power. Men tend to reward women who play the game by male rules. Some reported that men are even more threatened by women now than earlier because the chances are much greater that women will be elected or hired.

In general, men who relate to liberated mothers, spouses or friends can be counted on to be more affirming and supporting. Interestingly enough, women who had worked in both secular and church institutions reported that in the secular setting men appeared to be less threatened by women.

Women agreed that their increased involvement has affected the way boards and agencies function. Women tend to give higher priority to people's needs than men do. Because men are more invested in institutions than women are, they seem to show less compassion and view issues in economic terms or either-or terms. Women's participation on mission boards, for example, has encouraged more willingness to use women's gifts in mission and more thoughtful attention to their needs.

Another crucial difference is women's view and use of power. Women want to use power to create; men tend to use power to control. Men, for example, may use their board and agency positions as springboards to new, higher positions. They will delegate behind-the-scenes work to others and spend their time in public roles. Women are more likely to focus on the job that needs to be done than on the power plays or turf protection. They assume teamwork and cooperation and look for creative, people-oriented solutions to organizational problems.

In their expanding roles, women can easily fall into male

Mattie Loves All and *Gladdys Makes Peace* are two children's books recently printed by Brethren Press. Written in verse and with large, colorful illustrations, these primers tell the true stories of two Church of the Brethren women who pioneered in church and community leadership. Martha Cunningham Dolby (1878-1956) was the first black woman to be called to the ministry of that denomination. Gladdys Esther Muir (1895-1967) founded the Peace

Studies Institute at Manchester College, the first program of its type in the world.

Copies of these books are available for \$5.95 each from Brethren Press, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, Ill. 60120 or by phoning, toll-free, (800) 323-8039.

patterns of leadership. The seduction of power is a universal temptation not limited to one sex. In order to invite more effective participation by women in decision-making and the development of leadership skills, the group of women who met together suggested the following:

- 1) Orientation for new women appointees that will prepare them for their minority role.
- 2) Training for confrontation, expressing anger, and resolving conflicts.
- 3) More valuing of women's skills and extracurricular experience.
- 4) Increased availability of mentors (both male and female).
- 5) Affirmation of men who share power with women.
- 6) New definition of teamwork.
- 7) Re-visioning of our images of power and authority to conform to the model of Jesus Christ.

Perhaps more than anything else, the short-range view of personnel needs in boards and agencies is most damaging to the development of women in leadership. Although institutions are well aware of who will be retiring in the next five to 10 years, few—if any—of them are tapping women on the shoulder and asking them to prepare for leadership roles. A long-range view of personnel planning would suggest that advance preparation will greatly benefit the institution and ultimately the church.

Although much has been gained by and for women in the last two decades in the Mennonite Church, much remains to be accomplished. To gracefully meet the challenge without becoming cynical or weary is the task that lies ahead. •

The following women participated in the conversation on which this report was based: Lois Bare, Tina Hartzler, Joy Lovett, Arlene Mark, Dorothy Yoder Nyce, Gwen Preheim-Bartel, Barbara Reber, Kathy Royer, Mary Swartley, and Pat Swartzendruber. Their comments were summarized and interpreted by Alice M. Roth and Marlene Kropf. Alice is Vice-President for Administration for Goshen College and is a member of the Mennonite Church General Board. Marlene has served on the Council on Faith, Life and Strategy for the Mennonite Church and is staffperson in congregational education for Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries.

Letters

I have just read the May-June '85 issue on "Women's Development: A Critique of Existing Theory," and I want to congratulate Anna Bowman and the individual contributors on the excellence of the entire issue.

A friend lent me her copy, knowing that I would be interested, and I am now eager to obtain multiple copies of it to share with colleagues. Please send me ordering information.

—Bea Wilson, counselor/director, *Displaced Homemaker and Career/Life Planning Center, Hutchinson (Kan.) Community College*

The current issue of *Report* is really excellent—both content and appearance. I have been awaiting this issue on Women's Development for some time.

—Sue Steiner, *Waterloo, Ont.*

I have very much appreciated receiving *Report* for the last few years. At a recent meeting of our church's women's group I told them about *Report*. Twelve of the women expressed interest in receiving it.

I'm excited about more people in our church community reading *Report*. Also find enclosed a cheque and a list of addresses of the individuals.

—Donna Snyder, *Ottawa, Ont.*

I learned that Joy Lovett has written a paper on "Black Women and Feminism" [*Report* No. 59] which is available through the office of women's concerns at MCC.

I am teaching a course in Women's Literature next semester and would be interested in having Joy's paper for possible use in that class as we deal with the concerns of feminist black writers.

—Lee F. Snyder, *Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite College*

Teresa Pankratz of Chicago has provided the illustrations in this issue. She asks that they not be reproduced without her permission.

A friend of mine put me on the mailing list for the *Report*. I have enjoyed it very much and want to make a contribution toward its continued success.

—Colleen Hartsoe, High Point, N.C.

I have just receive the May-June 1985 issue of the *Women's Concerns Report*. I am writing to ask that you remove my name from the subscription list, since our household, Doss Holler Folks, already receives the *Report*. (I greatly enjoy reading it, and have frequently been both informed and challenged by its contents.)

—Elaine M. Stoltzfus, Ages, Ky.

Could you please put me on your mailing list for "MCC Committee on Women's Concerns" *Report*? The copies that have been passed on to me via members have been excellent.

—Deanna Brown Cizek, pastor, Skyridge Church of the Brethren, Kalamazoo, Mich.

REPORT is published bimonthly by the MCC Committee on Women's Concerns. The committee, formed in 1973, believes that Jesus Christ teaches equality of all persons. By sharing information and ideas, the committee strives to promote new relationships and corresponding supporting structures in which men and women can grow toward wholeness and mutuality. Articles and views presented in *Report* do not necessarily reflect official positions of the Committee

on Women's Concerns.

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